



# Section 5: Capitalization Help

Capitalization decisions can be simple but often are complex and subjective. The footnotes provide guidance for some of the thornier decisions. In addition, 2 rules of thumb may be helpful: (1) when writing for an audience that is used to a particular capitalization, follow that convention, even if you believe it is incorrect, and (2) when you make a subjective decision, make sure you follow it consistently throughout the document and apply it consistently to other similar capitalization decisions.

Word	Source <sup>1</sup>	(Form) Example of Usage
<b>A</b> Arctic <sup>2</sup>	C (7.36); G (332)	<i>Arctic/arctic<sup>2</sup> weather is the Arctic Circle is wildlife is abundant in the Arctic</i>
attorney general <sup>3</sup>	G (312,313)	<i>Attorneys General Johnson and Smith</i> Otherwise lowercase: <i>the attorneys general met</i>
<b>B</b> bay (see <i>sound</i> )		
board <sup>4</sup>	G (327)	<i>the board listened to the Board of Game listened to</i>
bush		<i>... bush Alaska</i>
Bush <sup>5</sup>	C (7.36,7.39)	<i>...benefit people in the Bush</i>
<b>C</b> capital improvement projects	G (306); C (7.49)	<i>capital improvement projects are</i>
Central Alaska <sup>6</sup>	C (7.36); G (341)	<i>in Central Alaska there are the Central Region has</i>
commissioner <sup>3</sup>	C (7.18); G (312)	<i>when Commissioner Smith was Smith, commissioner of ADF&amp;G the commissioner will not attend</i>
Congress	G (325)	Uppercase
constitution	G (346)	Lowercase unless proper name: <i>U.S. Constitution, or Constitution of the State of Alaska</i>

	Word	Source <sup>1</sup>	(Form) Example of Usage
	council <sup>4</sup>	(see <i>board</i> )	
D	Delta Bison Range	G (303)	Bounded placename; see <i>hunt</i>
	department <sup>4</sup>	C (7.49); G (327)	<i>Department of Fish and Game staff</i> <i>the department recommended</i>
	director <sup>3</sup>	(see <i>commissioner</i> )	
	district	C (7.49); G (331)	<i>the district catch was</i> <i>the District 15 catch was</i> <i>the Security Cove District catch was</i>
	division <sup>4</sup>	(see <i>department</i> )	
	Donut Hole	C (7.39); G (333a)	<i>harvests from the Donut Hole were</i>
	drainage	G (309b)	Always lowercase
E	east	G (338)	(placename) <i>cities in the East are</i> (compass direction) <i>the sun rises in the east</i>
	eastside <sup>7</sup>	C (7.39); G (338)	(popular name) <i>the Eastside gillnet fishery</i> (n) <i>the gillnet fisheries on the east side</i> (adj) <i>the eastside gillnet fisheries</i>
	elect	G (317)	<i>he was the governor-elect</i> (always lowercase)
	emergency order	G (346)	<i>when Emergency Order 1-Y-10-87 was</i> <i>the emergency order closed the</i>
	ex-	G (317 and 1101)	<i>ex-Governor Hickel left</i> (see Section 6: <i>ex/former</i> ) <i>the ex-governor left office on</i>
F	fax	G (356)	<i>the fax arrived at 5:30 PM</i>
	federal	G (328, 329)	<i>the federal government was</i> <i>the Federal Reserve Board lowered</i>
	federal aid	G (328)	Not capitalized unless used with proper title of program; i.e., <i>Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration</i> (can introduce an abbreviation)
	federal aid contracts	G (328)	<i>we mailed out the federal aid contracts</i>
	First Nation	G (348)	informal term used for indigenous inhabitants (e.g., <i>Tagish First Nation</i> )

Word	Source <sup>1</sup>	(Form) Example of Usage
First Nations	G (348)	legal treaty term for indigenous inhabitants (e.g., <i>Canadian First Nations</i> )
fiscal year	G (308)	<i>the fiscal year will end</i>
fish and game fund	G (308)	<i>funding will come from the fish and game fund</i>
fishery	C (7.41)	<i>when the gillnet fishery was when the False Pass fishery was</i>
fund	G (308)	When referring to fiscal funds with the state budget, use lowercase: <i>fish and game fund</i>
<b>G</b> general fund	G (308)	<i>the general fund shortfall</i>
governor <sup>3</sup>	C (7.18); G (312, 313)	<i>Jones, the governor of Alaska, was Governor-elect Jones traveled the governor signed into law (also see ex-; Section 6e)</i>
<b>H</b> herd	G (309b)	<i>the Alaska Peninsula caribou herd (see Section 3.3 also)</i>
hunt	G (309b)	<i>the Delta bison hunt was</i>
<b>I</b> Inside Passage	C (7.36); G (333a)	<i>the ship traveled the Inside Passage</i>
Interior Alaska	C (7.36); G (333a)	<i>species in Interior Alaska are the Alaska Interior is largely the Interior is largely</i>
Internet	G (303)	<i>Internet users were increasing</i>
<b>L</b> legislature	G (327)	<i>the legislature adjourned on the Alaska State Legislature passed SB 513 the 1996 legislature</i>
lower <sup>7</sup>	G (337); C (7.36)	<i>stocks in the Lower Yukon<sup>7</sup> are in the lower portion of the Yukon</i>
Lower 48	G (333a)	<i>the Lower 48 has a different climate</i>
<b>N</b> native	G (348, pp 261–262) C (7.34, 7.35)	<i>natives of Alaska (those born in Alaska) stocks native to this area were</i>

Word	Source <sup>1</sup>	(Form) Example of Usage
Native	G (348)	For indigenous inhabitants use: <i>Native American(s)/Alaska Natives; Canadian First Nations; Tagish First Nation</i>
north	(see <i>east</i> )	
North Pacific/Atlantic/Pole	C (7.36); G (341)	<i>North Pacific populations are</i>
North Slope	C (7.36, 7.39); G (333a)	<i>...the populations on the North Slope were</i>
northern Alaska <sup>6</sup>	C (7.36); G (341)	<i>the northern Alaska climate is</i>
northern Pacific Ocean <sup>6</sup>	C (7.36); G (341)	<i>those in the northern Pacific Ocean</i>
<b>P</b> Pacific Northwest	C (7.36); G (341)	<i>the Pacific Northwest experiences in the northwestern Pacific there are</i>
Pacific Rim	C (7.39); G (333a)	<i>dealing with Pacific Rim countries</i>
Panhandle, Alaska	C (7.39); G (333a)	<i>the ship made stops in the Alaska Panhandle</i>
permanent fund	G (308)	<i>the Alaska permanent fund</i>
<b>R</b> range	G (303, 331); C (7.49)	<i>the Delta Bison Range was the range east of Tok</i>
refuge	G (331)	<i>the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge the refuge was selected because</i>
Region	C (7.40)	<i>the Central Region has</i>
river	G (331); C (7.42)	<i>the Chilkat and Chilkoot Rivers flow the flow in the river was</i>
river mouth or system/basin <sup>8</sup>		<i>the Yukon river system <sup>8</sup> the Yukon river mouth</i>
<b>S</b> scuba	G (522a)	No longer capitalized (short for self- contained underwater breathing apparatus)
sound	G (331)	<i>the Prince William Sound harvest was oil deposits in the sound were</i>
south	(see <i>east</i> )	
Southcentral Alaska <sup>6</sup>	C (7.36); G (338, 341)	<i>moose in southcentral Alaska are Southcentral <sup>9</sup> moose populations were</i>
Southeast Alaska <sup>6</sup>	C (7.36); G (338, 341) G (332)	<i>deer in Southeast Alaska are deer in southeastern Alaska are deer in Southeast <sup>9</sup> are</i>

	Word	Source <sup>1</sup>	(Form) Example of Usage
	state <sup>10</sup>	C (7.40)	<i>and the state (or State) of Alaska was however, New York State (or state) was the state (or State)<sup>10</sup> requested that</i>
	stock	G (309b)	<i>the Togiak stock entered the</i>
	Styrofoam	G (356)	Trademark name — capitalize; use the term polystyrene unless referring specifically to the trademark product
	Super Cub	( <i>Piper Aircraft</i> )	a Super Cub was used for the survey
<b>T</b>	trans-Alaska pipeline	( <i>Alyeska</i> )	<i>The trans-Alaska pipeline opened</i>
	treaty	G (346a)	Lowercase unless part of title: <i>Pacific Salmon Treaty</i> <i>the treaty for U.S./Canada</i>
<b>U</b>	upper <sup>7</sup>	(see <i>lower</i> )	
<b>V</b>	village	G (334)	<i>the location of the village of Kobuk</i> (not part of proper name); however, <i>Kobuk Village employment</i> (part of proper name)
	Visqueen	G (356)	This still is capitalized: <i>uses Visqueen in camp</i>
<b>W</b>	weir	G (309b)	<i>the Chilkat River weir was</i>
	west	(see <i>east</i> )	
	western Alaska <sup>6</sup>	C (7.36); G (341)	<i>in western Alaska occur</i>
	west side <sup>7</sup>	(see <i>east side</i> )	
	Westward <sup>6,9</sup>	G (332)	<i>in the Westward Region there are</i> <i>in Westward<sup>9</sup> there are</i>
	World Wide Web	G (303)	always capitalize
<b>X</b>	Xerox	G (356)	Trademark name — always capitalize; avoid using as a verb in technical writing

<sup>1</sup> Source: C *The Chicago Manual of Style*. University of Chicago Press (1993). The section number is in parentheses.

G *The Gregg Reference Manual*, 8th edition. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill (1996). The section number is in parentheses.

- <sup>2</sup> When referring to the region, capitalize (e.g., “Arctic weather” meaning weather in the Arctic); when used as an adjective aligned with cold, lowercase (e.g., “arctic weather” meaning frigid).
  - <sup>3</sup> Do not customarily capitalize titles of state officials when used alone (e.g., *commissioners*, *senators*, *attorneys general*), except when title is part of the individual’s name (e.g., *Director Green*). These titles alone may be capitalized when there is a need for special emphasis; however, be consistent. Capitalize most high-ranking federal titles.
  - <sup>4</sup> Normally, words like *board*, *division*, *department*, *village*, and *council*, when used alone as a common name, are not capitalized. However, for some audiences it may be capitalized when the full authority of the agency is to be emphasized, such as *Council* for NPFMC in certain correspondence. Whether upper or lowercase, be consistent within a document (for more discussion see *Gregg*, sections 326 and 327).
  - <sup>5</sup> Capitalize *Bush* when referring to the geographic areas of Alaska and Australia.
  - <sup>6</sup> Nonspecific (unbounded) regions or areas of Alaska and similar proper geographic names are generally lowercased — e.g., *central Brooks Range*; *southeastern*, *western*, and *northern Alaska*; *northern Pacific Ocean*. However, some regions, especially those with geographic distinctiveness, have developed placename status; these include *Southeast Alaska*, *Interior Alaska* (the *Interior*), *Central Alaska*, and *Southcentral Alaska*. ADF&G administrative regions are always capitalized because they are proper names: *Southeast Region*, *Central Region*, *AYK Region*, *Westward Region*.
  - <sup>7</sup> Uppercasing of words like *upper*, *lower*, *middle*, etc., depends on whether they are part of an actual placename or simply denote a general area or location. If, for example, the upper area of the Yukon River had established boundaries representing a very specific region of the river, then *Upper Yukon* would be appropriate. If it was more of a general area, then it would be best to use *upper Yukon*. The same holds true for *west side* and *east side*.
  - <sup>8</sup> Although *river* can be a common noun (lowercase) or part of a river’s proper name (uppercase), *river system*, *river basin*, or *river mouth* are only compound common nouns (lowercase) and are never part of a river’s proper name. Therefore, in the example, *Yukon* is a proper-name adjective (uppercase) modifying the common compound noun *river system* or *river mouth* (lowercased); note that *Yukon* is actually a truncation of *Yukon River* to avoid redundancy—i.e., the *Yukon River river system* (*river mouth*). The proper name *River* is dropped rather than the common name *river*.
  - <sup>9</sup> The stand-alone form should not be used in technical or formal writing.
  - <sup>10</sup> Use “state of Alaska” for all uses except when referring specifically to the governmental body; for example, “*The State of Alaska is considering a comprehensive health plan for residents,*” or “*The State of Alaska must place at least 25 percent of all oil royalties in the permanent fund.*” The short form, *state* alone, should not be capitalized unless the lack of capitalization would produce ambiguity (where both government and geographic area are referred to in the same document).
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